

# Congressional Hispanic Caucus

108<sup>th</sup> Congress Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez, Chair

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Contact: Vanessa N. Gonzalez  
(202) 226-5629

## **Bush Budget Darkens Hispanic Future** **Critical Cuts Made to Education Programs**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Following Monday's release of the President's Budget for fiscal year 2005, Members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) expressed their outrage at insufficient funding for our nation's education system. Budget analysis shows that educational programs designed to improve Hispanic and low-income students' performance received no additional funding despite an increased need for these programs.

"The funding requests in the President's budget for our nation's education system are a disgrace," said Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez, CHC Chair. "How can you stand before the nation and call yourself the education President, when you obliterate the education budget, including your own program? And how can you pander to the Hispanic community while handicapping our children's chances for success in life? Once again, the Hispanic community will be hit the hardest by the Bush policy," continued Rodriguez.

Education is a top-tier priority for the Members of the CHC with funding priorities outlined in The Hispanic Education Action Plan (HEAP). HEAP encompasses programs such as bilingual education; migrant education; Migrant and Seasonal Head Start; English as a Second Language (ESL) programs for middle and high school students; aid for Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI's) and the national dropout prevention program. The majority of HEAP programs did not receive additional funding from the previous year and the nation's dropout prevention program budget was sliced from \$5 million to zero, eliminating the program.

Despite stressing the importance of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) during the State of the Union Address, the President underfunds the program by \$9.4 billion, leaving many local school districts and students without necessary funding for educational success.

"The Bush budget falls \$9.4 billion short in funding the No Child Left Behind Act. This is a budget deficit that our children, the future of this nation, cannot afford," said Congressman Ruben Hinojosa, Chair of the CHC Education Task Force. "This means

that millions of children will not get the smaller classes, better teachers, and help with reading and math they were promised. Implementing No Child Left Behind presents special challenges for rural school districts and yet this budget provides no increase for rural education.”

The Bush budget also freezes the maximum Pell Grant at \$4, 050, enough to cover just 34 percent of the average annual cost of college, despite the nationwide rise in college tuition. Many Hispanics rely on these federal funds to pay for college, these caps will create yet another roadblock in the Hispanic community’s access to higher education.

*The Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) is comprised of 20 members of Congress of Hispanic descent. Since 1976 the CHC has been addressing the needs of the Hispanic community in all areas of American life. For more information on the CHC call (202) 225-2410.*

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